

Fletchers puts best foot forward to spring

Hot vibrant tones are kicking pastel colors off the top of the women's shoe hill this year. The reign pastel colors has had in women's shoes the last three to four

years is ending, says Ralph Fletcher, co-owner of Fletcher's Family Shoe Store in Georgetown. The shelves at the 39 Main Street South store are colored by mustard, rich

blue and fuchsia shoes. Fletcher's also has matching purses and belts in the same bright colors, to match the shoes. Even in casual wear the co-ordinated look is popular. Not long ago women did not care about matching accessories when it came to casual dressing, but no longer, Mr. Fletcher says.

The snake and lizard skin look is another hot item this year. Not the real skins but imitations made from leather. At Fletcher's there is no substitute for leather. In sandals, as in shoes, leather always gives the comfort, Mr. Fletcher says.

Two consistent fashion factors in women's shoes this year are white and pumps. Pumps have remained the popular dress shoe for women. The casual look is sandals and shoes with low heels. Low heeled shoes are especially popular among teens.

For young men, boat shoes are still floating higher than the rest. Bright colors have not taken over the male shoe market. Grey is a popular color in the boat shoe. It's been about nine years, but desert boots are having a rebirth, Mr. Fletcher says.

For older men, the casual look this year is a sophisticated European shoe, something to replace the walkie.

Black, brown and grey are the popular dress shoe colors as always, Mr. Fletcher says. For young men, jazz oxfords with a tapered toe and low heel are popular.

Not color but comfort are what men's and women's shoes have in common. "Comfort footwear is still number one. Comfort comes before fashion," Mr. Fletcher says. Children will be comfortable this year in joggers with velcro instead



IF THE SHOE FITS—Ralph Fletcher helps a young lady pick out the shoe of her choice recently. Fletcher's Family Shoes has a wide variety of footwear for the spring and summer.

of laces. Fletcher's carries navy, black and white colors for boys and pink, grey and white for girls. In the dress shoe department, little girls will be wearing white dress sandals with an open toe rather than

white shoes which was popular last year. Fletcher's rents dress shoes for children. Oxfords are available at the store for those needing a smart shoe for a wedding or other special occasion.

Just for the frill of it

Spring is in the air and, this year, it's just "frilling." The season's fashion stories are floating in on clouds of crinoline, ruffles and lace. Austere menswear looks have gone by

the wayside, and ultra feminine trills and fancies are in the forefront.

Plunging necklines and off-the-shoulder styles make earrings this season's most essential fashion accessory.

Gold filled earrings (also referred to as gold overlay) are an affordable yet elegant way to complement spring fashion's biggest stories, says Frieda Forsley, Fashion Consultant to the Jewelry Industry Council.

Lacy lingerie is the inspiration for sexy spaghetti strap and strapless sun dresses. Gold filled earrings in delicate filigree or engraved designs pick up this "petticoat" theme with a graceful charm that's at once subtle and seductive.

Dropped shoulders are bringing new emphasis to the bosom, spring fashion's focal point. As necklines plunge, so should earrings, to give balance. Gold filled drops and danglers are flirtation at its finest.

Styles range from lighthearted and airy to strong and assured. They're available plain or adorned with pearls, diamonds or colored stones.

Layering is an important component to this season's apparel. Ruffles, flounces and tiers are strategically located to accentuate the feminine form.

Jewelry adds texture to spring classics

Fashion trends come and go annually, and oftentimes one finds that clothes which were in vogue five, 10 or even 20 years ago can be "recycled" with the help of carefully chosen accessories.

For spring, wide, textured belts, paisley and floral patterned scarves, rich-looking gold jewelry, and fanciful and classic-styled watches will be the popular looks in accessories, which can effectively update almost any outfit.

Careful accessorizing is especially important in the spring, when the layers of winter clothing are removed and last year's outfits get appraised on their fashion-worthiness.

It is important, however, to choose those accessories that add a stylish accent rather than dominate today's fashions.

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